

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings:

1-16. (Cancelled).

17. (Currently Amended) A method for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising the steps of:

receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider, said service request including service request data;

informing the user of a charge collection based on said charge collection request received from said service provider; and

when an objection to the fee is received from the user, verifying validity of the charge collection based on said service request data and digital signature data, said digital signature data being generated based on said service request data,

wherein,

the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided via a removable storage medium device, constituted by hardware, connectable to a user terminal,

the digital signature data is created from a name of the user and an account number of the user using the user terminal, and

information stored on the storage medium cannot be modified using software techniques.

18. (Previously Presented) The method according to the claim 17, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the user.

19. (Cancelled).

20. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the service provider.

21. (Currently Amended) A system for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising:

means for receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider, said service request including service request data;

means for informing the user of a charge collection based on said charge collection request received from said service provider; and

means for verifying validity of the charge collection based on said service request data and digital signature data, said digital signature data being generated based on said service request data,

wherein,

the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided via a removable storage medium device, constituted by hardware, connectable to a user terminal,

the digital signature data is created from a name of the user and an account number of the user using the user terminal, and

information stored on the storage medium cannot be modified using software techniques.

22. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the user.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 21, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the service provider.

25. (Currently Amended) A system for accounting for a fee concerning service provided to a user by a service provider to a user, comprising:

an accounting terminal for receiving from said service provider a charge collection request based on a service request sent from the user to said service provider, said service request including service request data, wherein the accounting terminal

informs the user of a charge collection based on said charge collection request received from said service provider, and

when an objection to the fee is received from the user, verifies validity of the charge collection based on said service request data and digital signature data, said digital signature data being generated based on said service request data,

wherein,

the service request and the digital signature data for verifying are provided via a removable storage medium device, constituted by hardware, connectable to a user terminal,

the digital signature data is created from a name of the user and an account number of the user using the user terminal, and

information stored on the storage medium cannot be modified using software techniques.

26. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 25, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the user.

27. (Cancelled).

28. (Previously Presented) The system according to claim 25, wherein the service request data and the digital signature data for verifying are provided from the service provider.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to the claim 17, wherein the removable storage medium device comprises hardware is an IC card.

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to the claim 21, wherein the removable storage medium device comprises hardware is an IC card.

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to the claim 25, wherein the removable storage medium device comprises hardware is an IC card.